

TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 237
Revise Laws Relating to Brucellosis Surveillance
Senate Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation Committee
Hearing: Feb 10, 2011 3:00 PM Rm 355

My name is Jim Hagenbarth and our family has been in the livestock industry in Montana and Idaho for over 100 years. We have units in both states in the Greater Yellowstone Area (GYA) and we move cattle across the border twice each year. Federal and state regulations have required us to manage our herd to insure we do not pose any risk to the cattle industries of both states. We have spent over \$250,000 since 1970 addressing this concern through testing and vaccination. I served on the Board of livestock from 1985-97. Since 1985 there has been little brucellosis infection in livestock and essentially no risk to the public from livestock or milk. In the last few years APHIS and the state veterinarians have recognized the archaic rules we are working under and have proposed and implemented new rules to address the risk that remains in the infected wildlife in the GYA. Huge strides have been made on the state and federal level to modify regulations in dealing with risk and this disease. This is unusual in our present day regulatory climate.

The impetus behind this bill came from disgruntled livestock operators in areas where diseased wildlife is present and testing has occurred. The fact that brucellosis has been transmitted from elk to cattle has led to federal and state regulations that address this risk. APHIS requires that these areas of risk be identified as "designated surveillance areas"(DSA) and that risk mitigating practices occur to insure brucellosis is not carried out of these areas by marketed cattle. This is a very reasonable approach and is necessary if the rest of the state and nation is to be spared the burden of this disease that now exists in the GYA elk and bison. At first the DSA requirements imposed by the state were very stringent, expensive and overbearing and caused the frustration represented by this bill. After a lot of costly testing and intense producer input, the Department of Livestock has recognized the validity of change of ownership and market testing as the basic tools to identify brucellosis transmission to livestock in a DSA. This was a huge step by the department in recognizing the pleas of those in the DSA's. APHIS requires that we have DSA's where diseased wildlife and cattle intermingle, and rightfully so. We must identify these areas so producers can use best management practices to protect themselves, the industry and the public from this wildlife disease. Let us look ahead to developing protocols to mitigate risk to a problem that is going to be with us for a long time. The Department of Livestock is the government entity that needs to deal with this problem, not the legislature. Let's look ahead and recognize that proactive input can lead to good decisions. Senate Bill 237 is a step backwards. Please oppose this bill.

Thanks for all the work you do for us,

Jim Hagenbarth
PO Box 1128
Dillon, MT 59725
406 683-2163